

## WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method for distributing data among competitive dealers,  
comprising:

- 5        selecting the data from the dealers;  
         processing the data; and  
         providing the processed data to the dealers while maintaining  
confidentiality of individual data of each dealer.

- 10       2. A method of claim 1, wherein the selecting of the data further  
comprises collecting data indicating which vehicles are in demand.

3. A method of claim 2, wherein the data includes at least one of a  
number of a vehicle's make a dealer has in stock, a vehicle identification  
15       number, a vehicle's year, a vehicle's make, a vehicle's model, a vehicle's  
body style, a vehicle's exterior color, a vehicle's interior color, a vehicle's  
mileage, a vehicle's retail asking price, a vehicle's transactions cost, a  
vehicle's reconditioning cost, a vehicle's age, a vehicle's selling price, a  
vehicle's gross profit, an acquisition need of a vehicle, a selling need of a  
20       vehicle, a vehicle's image, a vehicle's turnover rate, or an aggregate of any of  
the above-listed data.

4. A method of claim 1, wherein the distributed data provide  
optimization on return on investments to the dealers.

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5. A method for networking dealers managing systems,  
comprising:

pooling data from the dealers managing systems to produce aggregate  
data while maintaining confidentiality of individual data of each dealer; and

5 sharing the aggregate data among the dealers;

wherein the dealers use the aggregate data to benchmark the dealers'  
market situations and to better understand the dealers' marketplace.

6. A method of claim 5, wherein the aggregate data includes

10 aggregates of at least one of each dealer's sales history, each dealer's  
inventory, each dealer's manufacturing brand, each dealer's size, other  
dealers' inventories, a list of vehicles a dealer needs to sell, data relating to  
how certain dealers do with specific vehicles, book values of vehicles,  
description of vehicles, and offers on vehicles from other dealers.

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7. A method of claim 6, further providing to the dealer a list of  
dealers who might be interested in the list of vehicles the dealer needs to sell.

8. A method of claim 5, wherein the marketplace is at least one of  
20 a local, a regional, or a national marketplace.

9. A method of claim 5, wherein the dealers are at least one of a  
franchise dealer, a wholesale dealer, a retail dealer, or an independent dealer.

10. A method of claim 5, further comprising capturing data from buying dealers to better understand the buying dealers' interests or habits.

11. A method of claim 5, further comprising capturing buying habits of wholesalers and dealers to identify which wholesalers or dealers have a high demand for a specific vehicle.

12. A method of claim 11, further comprising contacting the wholesalers or dealers that have the high demand for the specific vehicle.

13. A method of claim 5, further comprising providing the aggregate data to a franchise dealer to allow the franchise dealer to streamline its vehicles among the franchise dealer's dealerships.

14. A method of claim 5, further comprising providing the aggregate data to a transportation company.

15. A method of claim 5, wherein the dealers use the aggregate data to determine which bank is most profitable to finance a vehicle.

16. A method of claim 5, further comprising providing the aggregate data to a registered auction house such that the auction house can determine its market situations.

17. A method of claim 5, wherein the aggregate data is put up for  
bid to dealers that do not participate in the dealers managing systems network.

18. A method of claim 5, wherein the aggregate data is sold to a  
5 service company.

19. A method of claim 5, wherein dealers that participate in the  
dealers managing systems network are compensated for the aggregate data  
when the aggregate data is distributed to non-participants.

10 20. A method for keeping a dealership apprized of changing market  
conditions, comprising:

providing a to do list in response to the changing market conditions;

and

15 making recommendations to the dealership with regard to selling and  
buying of vehicles.

21. A method of claim 20, wherein the providing the to do list  
further comprises monitoring the dealership's and other dealers' inventories;  
20 monitoring the dealership's and other dealers' sales histories; and monitoring  
the market conditions to determine which dealers have high probabilities of  
selling vehicles for high profits in short periods of time before making  
recommendations to the dealership regarding the selling and buying of the  
vehicles.

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22. A method of claim 20, wherein the to do list includes at least one of a number of vehicles in retail inventory, a number of vehicles in wholesale inventory, a total number of vehicles in inventory, a recommendation to increase or decrease the total number of vehicles in inventory, a number of vehicles needing review retail purchase needs, a number of retail vehicles today, a number vehicles to watch, a number of wholesale purchase offers, a number of vehicles for wholesale center, a number of current day supply of vehicles, a number of target day supply of vehicles, or a review activity summary.

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23. A method of claim 22, wherein the number of retail vehicles today includes vehicles that are approaching a predetermined age threshold set by the dealership to go on the wholesale inventory.

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24. A method of claim 22, wherein the number of current day supply of vehicles is a number of days it takes a dealership to sell its inventory based on at least one of the dealership's sales history, the dealership's current inventory, the dealership's supply of vehicles, or an amount of money that is tied up in the dealership's inventory.

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25. A method of claim 22, wherein the number of target day supply of vehicles is a predetermined number of days the dealership had set as a goal for the number of days of inventory on hand.

26. A method for selling vehicles among competitive dealers,  
comprising:

determining whether a vehicle meets its dealer's predefined goals;  
flagging vehicles that do not meet their dealers' predefined goals; and  
5 placing a smart score ranking of potential buying dealers for each of  
the flagged vehicles.

27. A method of claim 26, wherein the smart score is based on at  
least one of a number of bids a buying dealer made in the last predetermined  
10 number of days; a current day supply of a make and model of a vehicle for the  
buying dealer according to a predetermined average of the make and model of  
the vehicle sold over a predetermined number of days; a current day supply of  
a make, model, and year of a vehicle for the buying dealer according to a  
predetermined average of the make, model, and year of the vehicle sold over a  
15 predetermined number of months; current day supply of a make, model, and  
price of a vehicle for the buying dealer according to a predetermined average  
of the make, model, and price of the vehicle sold over a predetermined number  
of days; a current day supply of a make, model, and mileage of a vehicle for  
the buying dealer according to a predetermined average of the make, model,  
20 and mileage of the vehicle sold over a predetermined number of days; a  
current day supply of a make, model, and mileage of a vehicle for the buying  
dealer according to a predetermined average of the make, model, and mileage  
of the vehicle sold over a predetermined number of days; how many vehicles  
of the same make and model the buying dealer sold over a predetermined  
25 number of days; the buying dealer's return on investment for the make and

model over a predetermined number of months; how many and what combinations of the same year, make, and model of the vehicle the buying dealer purchased over a predetermined number of days; how many and what combinations of the same year, make, and model of the vehicle the buying dealer has bid on over a predetermined number of days; the buying dealer being a member of a same dealer group; the vehicle matching an entry in the buying dealer's buy list; or how close the vehicle matches an entry in the buying dealer's buy list.

10           28.     A method of claim 27, wherein a selling dealer sets the scores that make up the smart score for a buying dealer.

              29.     A method of claim 26, further comprising recommending a dealer to sell a flagged vehicle by at least putting the vehicle on a wholesale center or a watch list.

              30.     A method of claim 29, wherein a buying dealer with a higher smart score is recommended to a selling dealer over a buying dealer with a lower smart score.

20           31.     A method of claim 26, wherein a dealer's predefined goals include at least one of the dealer's historical return on investment on a vehicle, the dealer's request for vehicles with a predetermined mileage, a number of vehicles the dealer wants to sell in a year, a number of vehicles the dealer has in stock, or an inventory turn.

32. A method of claim 26, wherein each dealer may limit the dealers it wishes to deal with.

33. A method for alerting a potential buyer of a used vehicle,  
5 comprising:  
collecting data from dealers;  
processing the data; and  
notifying the potential buyer of the processed data by using at least a  
fax device, a desktop computing device, a portable message device, a portable  
10 voice device, a telephone, a pager, or a WAP device while maintaining  
confidentiality of individual data of each dealer.

34. A method of claim 33, wherein the processed data includes an  
identification number for the buyer to go online and get additional data on the  
15 used vehicle.

35. A method of claim 34, wherein the potential buyer gets an  
instant message of the processed data on any of the notification devices.

20 36. A method of claim 33, wherein a potential seller can get an  
Appraisal Activity on a vehicle and place an order on the vehicle based on the  
Appraisal Activity.

37. A method for instantly appraising vehicles by a community of  
25 dealers over a computer network, comprising:



creating the community of dealers to appraise the vehicles; and  
appraising a vehicle in a marketplace that is at least one of a local  
marketplace, a regional marketplace, or a national marketplace.

5           38.     A method of claim 37, wherein the creating of the community  
is done electronically based on at least one of the dealers' working  
relationships with each other, the dealers' registration with all the other  
dealers, or the dealers' performance in appraising vehicles.

10           39.     An apparatus for determining distributed data among  
competitive dealers, comprising a device programmed to select the data from  
the dealers, process the data, and provide the processed data to the dealers  
while maintaining confidentiality of individual data of each dealer.

15           40.     An apparatus of claim 39, wherein the data to be selected  
includes at least one of a number of a vehicle's make that a dealer has in stock,  
a vehicle identification number, a vehicle's year, a vehicle's make, a vehicle's  
model, a vehicle's body style, a vehicle's exterior color, a vehicle's interior  
color, a vehicle's mileage, a vehicle's retail asking price, a vehicle's  
20 transactions cost, a vehicle's reconditioning cost, a vehicle's age, a vehicle's  
selling price, a vehicle's gross profit, an acquisition need of a vehicle, a selling  
need of a vehicle, a vehicle's image, a vehicle's turnover rate, or an aggregate  
of any of the above-listed data.

41. An apparatus of claim 39, wherein the distributed data provide optimization on return on investments to the dealers.

42. A system to network dealers managing systems among competitive dealers, comprising:

a pooling device programmed to pool data from the dealers managing systems to produce aggregate data while maintaining confidentiality of individual data of each dealers managing system; and

a sharing device programmed to share the aggregate data among the dealers;

wherein the dealers use the aggregate data to benchmark the dealers' market situations and to better understand the dealers' marketplace.

43. A system of claim 42, wherein the aggregate data that is produced by the collecting device includes aggregates of at least one of each dealer's sales history, each dealer's inventory, each dealer's manufacturing brand, each dealer's size, other dealers' inventories, a list of vehicles a dealer needs to sell, data relating to how certain dealers do with specific vehicles, book values of vehicles, description of vehicles, and offers on vehicles from other dealers.

44. A system of claim 43, further comprising a device programmed to provide to the dealer a list of dealers who might be interested in the list of vehicles the dealer needs to sell.

45. A system of claim 42, wherein the marketplace is at least one of a local, a regional, or a national marketplace.

46. A system of claim 42, wherein the dealers are at least one of a franchise dealer, a wholesale dealer, a retail dealer, or an independent dealer.

47. A system of claim 42, wherein the collecting device captures data from buying dealers to better understand the buying dealers' interests or habits.

48. A system of claim 42, wherein the pooling device is programmed to capture buying habits of wholesalers and dealers to identify which wholesalers or dealers have a high demand for a specific vehicle.

49. A system of claim 48, further comprising a contacting device programmed to contact the wholesalers or dealers that have the high demand for the specific vehicle.

50. A system of claim 42, wherein the sharing device further provides the aggregate data to a franchise dealer to allow the franchise dealer to streamline its vehicles among the franchise dealer's dealerships.

51. A system of claim 42, wherein the sharing device further provides the aggregate data to a transportation company.

52. A system of claim 42, wherein the dealers use the aggregate data to determine which bank is most profitable to finance a vehicle.

53. A system of claim 42, wherein the sharing device further  
5 provides the aggregate data to a registered auction house such that the auction house can determine its market situations.

54. An apparatus to keep a dealership apprized of changing market conditions, comprising a device programmed to provide a to do list in  
10 response to the changing market conditions and to make recommendations to the dealership with regard to selling and buying of vehicles.

55. An apparatus of claim 54, wherein the device is further  
programmed to monitors the dealership's and other dealers' inventories, to  
15 monitor the dealership's and other dealers' sales histories, and to monitor the market conditions to determine which dealers have high probabilities of selling vehicles for high profits in short periods of time before it makes recommendations to the dealership regarding the selling and buying of the vehicles.

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56. An apparatus of claim 54, wherein the to do list includes at least one of a number of vehicles in retail inventory, a number of vehicles in a retail showroom, a number of vehicles in wholesale inventory, a total number of vehicles in inventory, a recommendation to increase or decrease the total  
25 number of vehicles in inventory, a number of vehicles needing review retail

purchase needs, a number of retail vehicles today, a number vehicles to watch, a number of wholesale purchase offers, a number of vehicles for wholesale center, a number of current day supply of vehicles, a number of target day supply of vehicles, or a review activity summary.

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57. An apparatus of claim 56, wherein the number of retail vehicles today includes vehicles that are approaching a predetermined age threshold set by the dealership to go on the wholesale inventory.

10 58. An apparatus of claim 56, wherein the number of current day supply of vehicles is a number of days it takes a dealership to sell its inventory based on at least one of the dealership's sales history, the dealership's current inventory, the dealership's supply of vehicles, or an amount of money that is tied up in the dealership's inventory.

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59. An apparatus of claim 56, wherein the number of target day supply of vehicles is a predetermined number of days the dealership had set as a goal for the number of days of inventory on hand.

20 60. A system for alerting a potential buyer of a used vehicle, comprising:

a device programmed to collect data from dealers and to process the data; and

a notification device to notify the potential buyer of the processed data  
25 including at least one of a fax device, a desktop computing device, a portable

message device, a portable voice device, a telephone, a pager, or a WAP device while maintaining confidentiality of individual data of each dealer.

61. A system of claim 60, wherein the processed data includes an  
5 identification number for the buyer to go online and get additional data on the used vehicle.

62. A system of claim 61, wherein the potential buyer gets an instant message of the processed data on any of the notification devices.

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